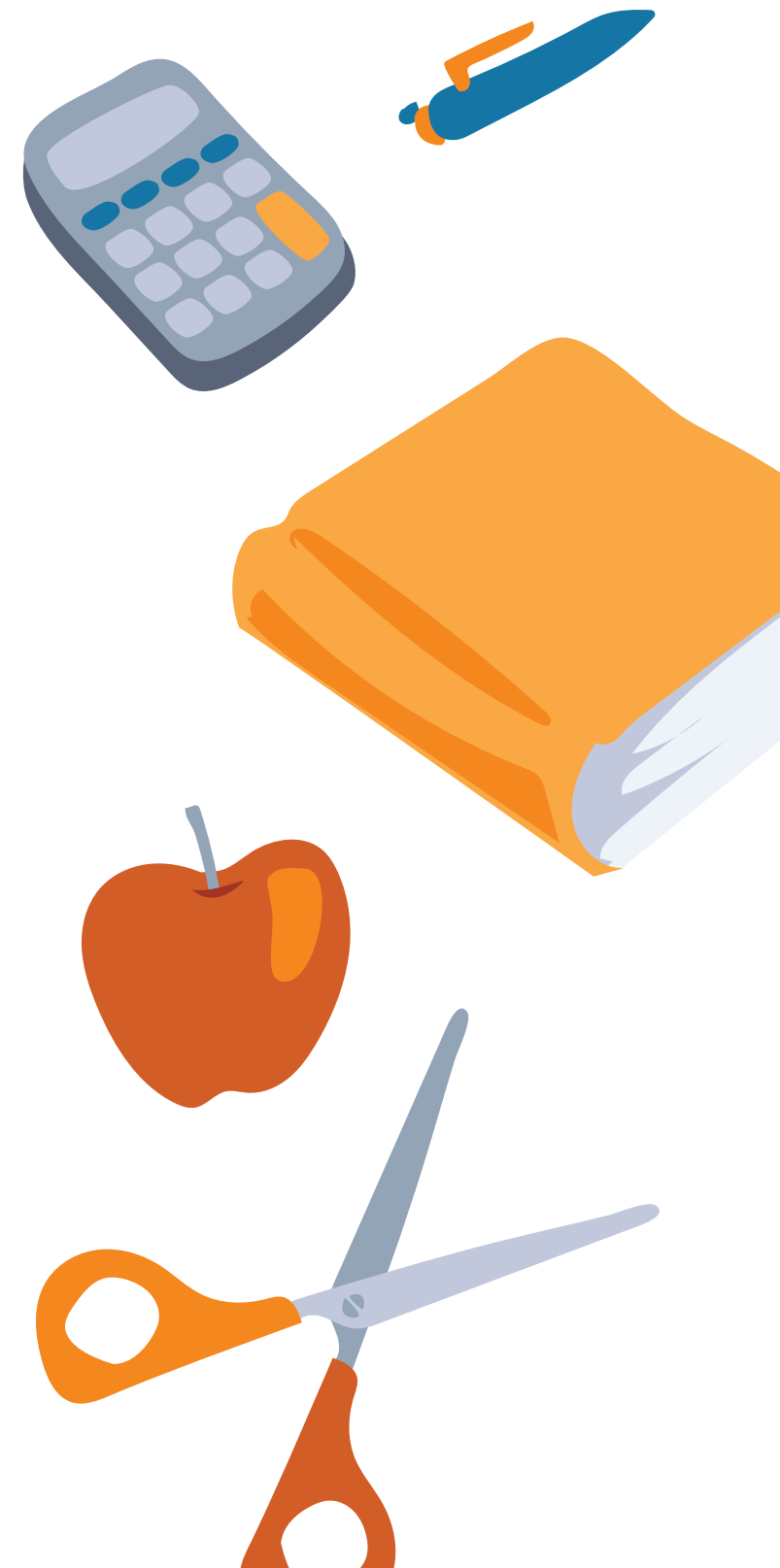




# Back-to-School 2021

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Following more than a year of remote and hybrid learning, most American families are finally preparing for a full return to the classroom this fall. Shopkick surveyed more than 7,400 American consumers planning to make school-related purchases in the coming months to gain insights into shopping and spending plans. The survey was conducted between May 5-10, 2021.

While much of the 2020 school year was spent at-home, **71% of survey respondents say the children they'll be shopping for will be returning to school in-person, full-time this fall.** This is a significant jump from the mere 28% of parents who said the same following holiday break this past January. Alternatively, 7% say their children will be returning to school half in-person and half virtually, 4% will be learning virtually full-time, and 18% aren't quite sure yet.

In line with last year's findings, most back-to-school shoppers will be making purchases for 1 or 2 children (34% and 36%, respectively), while 16% will be shopping for 3 children, and 14% will be shopping for 4 or more children.

Although a majority of those surveyed include parents, guardians, grandparents, and relatives shopping for children in their lives, 13% of respondents categorized themselves as students planning to make back-to-school purchases for themselves. When asked about their plans to return to school this fall, only 40% of students said they plan to return to

school in-person, full-time. 17% will be returning half in-person and half virtually, 22% will be learning virtually full-time, and 21% aren't sure yet.

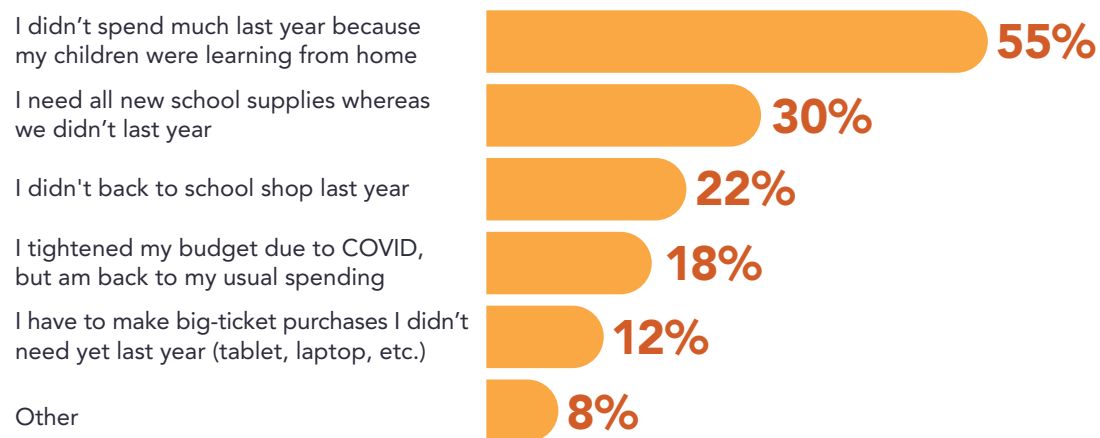
Despite the sense of normalcy brought on by widespread vaccinations, **45% of consumers still expect the pandemic to impact how they shop this back-to-school season.** Of those consumers, more than half will shop online more than they typically would (55%), and plan to make fewer shopping trips (53%). And after a year that was difficult for many families financially, 44% plan to spend less on frivolous back-to-school purchases (a slight drop from the 60% who said the same last back-to-school season.)

### How do you expect the pandemic to impact how you shop?



Despite the pandemic's financial implications, **37% of back-to-school shoppers are planning to spend more on school essentials this year than they did last, while 39% expect to spend around the same amount.** Of those planning to up their back-to-school budget this year, reasons include decreased spending last year due to at-home learning (55%), needing all new school supplies (30%), and returning to pre-pandemic spending habits (30%).

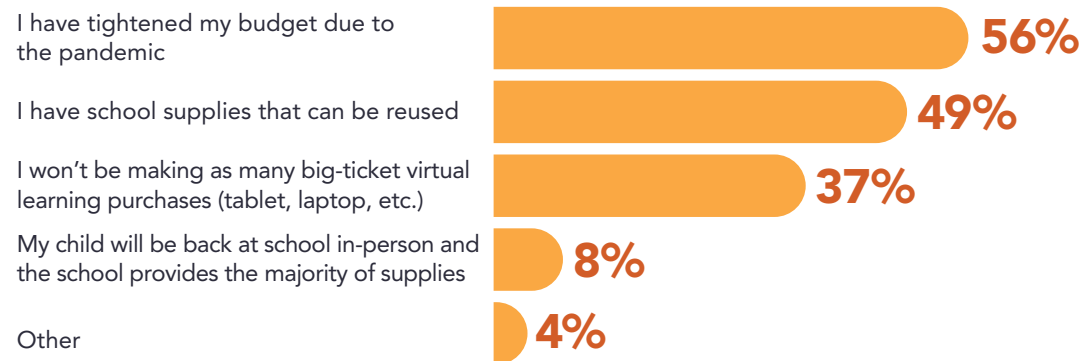
### Why do you expect to spend more this year?



The return to in-person learning also means families are ready to shell out on supplies. **This year, the largest segment of shoppers (42%) plan to spend between \$101-\$300.** An additional 21% will spend between \$301 - \$600, and 12% will spend upwards of \$600.

Although a majority of shoppers aren't expecting to cut their back-to-school budget this year, a remaining 24% are planning to spend less this year than they did last, with 56% citing the pandemic as the main reason.

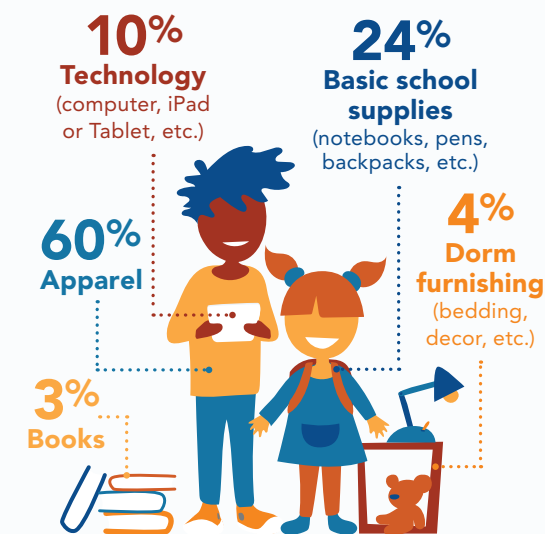
### Why do you expect to spend less this year?



Even after a year where many prioritized safety and convenience when shopping, price will take precedence this back-to-school season. **70% of consumers say that shopping deals to get the best price will be their top priority this year,** beating out safety (8%), convenience (6%), children's preference (7%), sustainability (1%) and more by a landslide.

This year, **more than half of consumers (60%) plan to spend most of their back-to-school budgets on apparel,** trailed by basic school supplies (24%), technology (10%), dorm furnishings (4%), and books (3%).

### In which category do you expect to spend the most money?



Health and safety remain top of mind, according to 90% of consumers who plan to add COVID-19 precautionary supplies to their carts. Such items include hand sanitizer (79%), cleaning wipes (71%), masks (61%), paper products (55%), and disposable cutlery for lunchtime (21%).

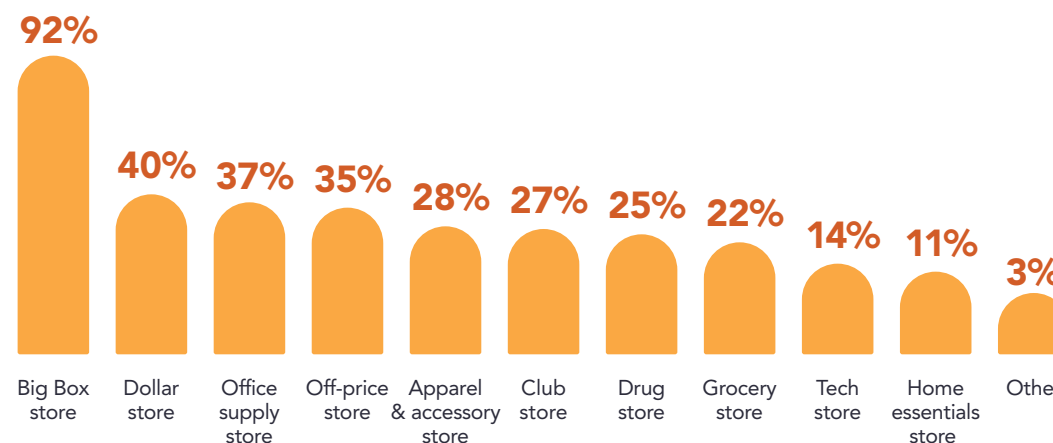
While the new school year may not be here for a few months, **consumers are eager to get a head start on back-to-school shopping, with 19% who say they have already started.** Most others plan to shop either one or two months prior to the start of school (42% and 28%, respectively) while some plan to wait until a week before (8%) or after school begins (3%).

In a shift from pandemic-induced online shopping, consumers are ready to get back to brick-and-mortar retailers this back-to-school season. 92% of respondents plan to do their back-to-school shopping in-store (up significantly from 66% last fall) while 57% plan to shop online (up from 34%.)

While most consumers (56%) say their back-to-school shopping method is about the same as last year, others are switching it up. 27% plan to shop in-store more than last year, 30% plan to shop online more than last year (16% on a desktop or laptop and 14% on a phone or tablet), and finally, 10% plan to shop at local smaller retailers that were impacted by the pandemic.

Much like years past, **92% of in-store shoppers will flock to big-box retailers like Target and Walmart,** followed by dollar stores (40%), office supply stores (38%), and off-price retailers (35%). **85% of online shoppers will turn to Amazon,** followed by big-box retail sites (69%), office supply sites (27%), and online apparel retailers (26%).

## Where will you shop in-store?



## Where will you shop online?



Consumers have become well-accustomed to the omnichannel shopping experience, and this back-to-school season proves no different. **85% of Americans say they will use their mobile devices while shopping, for everything from price comparing to making mobile purchases**, proving that now isn't the time to abandon your omnichannel strategy. Additionally, 38% of consumers expect to take advantage of BOPIS (buy-online-pickup-in-store) when available.

While Americans prepare for this back-to-school season in different ways than last year, some habits are sticking around. Retailers must be ready for an influx of in-store shopping without neglecting the omnichannel, mobile experiences consumers have grown accustomed to over the past year.

Shopkick's omnichannel solution can help drive engagement, foot traffic, and incremental sales this back-to-school season without the use of margin-diluting coupons or discounts.



To learn more about why Shopkick makes an easy and effective addition to any back-to-school strategy, please get in touch at [partners@shopkick.com](mailto:partners@shopkick.com)